

OBITUARY

DAVID NUNES NABARRO

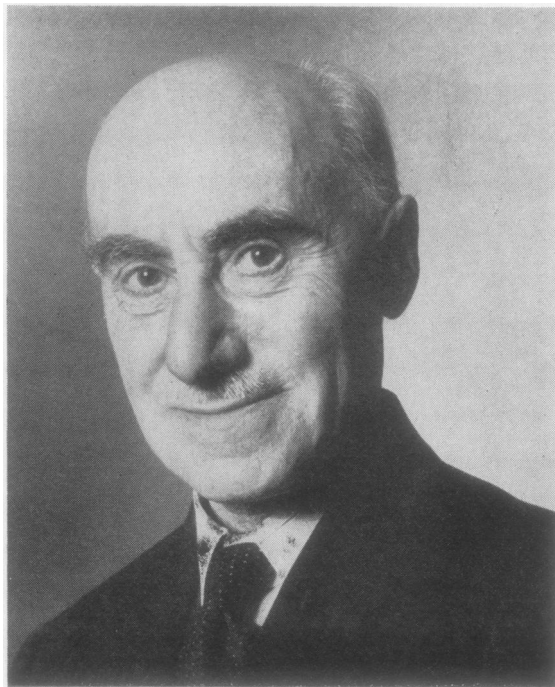
David Nunes Nabarro, who was the first Director of the Pathological Department of The Hospital for Sick Children, Great Ormond Street, London, died at his home in London on October 3, 1958. He was 84 years of age. He was educated at Owens School and University College Hospital, London, and qualified first with a B.Sc at the age of 19, and with the Conjoint Diploma at 23. He passed his M.B., London, examination in 1898, and the M.D. (winning the gold medal) in 1899. He acquired the D.P.H. in 1901, was admitted a Member of the College of Physicians in the same year, and was elected a Fellow in 1917. He had been an exhibitioner and had won numerous prizes and awards during his student career. After holding house appointments in University College Hospital he was appointed to his first pathological post as Assistant Professor of Pathology and lecturer on bacteriology at University College in 1899, and held this appointment, together with that of pathologist to the Evelina Hospital for Sick Children, till 1910. After a brief stay in the provinces as pathologist to the Wakefield Asylum for two years he returned to London in 1912 as clinical pathologist to The Hospital for Sick Children. His whole future was bound up with the pathology of children's diseases, and he had immense attachment to and pride in the development of the department and the hospital which he so dearly loved. He saw them both grow to their present pre-eminence with pride.

In his earlier years he was a member of the Royal Society's Commission which went to Uganda in 1903 to investigate sleeping sickness. He was the joint discoverer with Dr. David Bruce and Dr. Aldo Castellani of the trypanosome and its mode of transmission, but felt that his contribution to the discovery had never been properly acknowledged. Since his days in Wakefield he had acquired an interest

in syphilis and dysentery, and these two subjects he studied continuously and with much fervour. He started a clinic at Great Ormond Street for the investigation and treatment of congenital syphilis and juvenile gonorrhoea, and his clinical control of the patients, both as out-patients and as in-patients in his tiny isolated ward, together with the laboratory control, provided an early example of clinical pathology at its best. He loved the children, however crippled, and spent countless hours on even hopeless cases of juvenile G.P.I. He collected his data most meticulously, and after a number of years was persuaded that he had a unique experience of congenital syphilis and should publish it. However, as new cases occurred he would again and repeatedly go right back and alter his tables and data, until eventually in retirement he really got down to the analysis of the data. His book was finally published when he was 80, and will remain the classical British work on the subject, which will be so valuable to those who will now only see very rare cases of congenital syphilis. His work on the dysenteries, especially Sonne dysentery, if it did not reach such fruition at least showed the importance of strict attention to nursing details when children of varying ages are herded together under ward conditions.

His greatest contribution to pathology, however, lies in his early vision of the role of the pathologist and the laboratories in a hospital community. It was no accident that he was a founder member of the Association of Clinical Pathologists when most of the members were from the provinces and the Association was rather frowned upon by the London and academic pathologists, and he was honoured by becoming its President in 1947.

As a person he was quiet and rather mild, except on the rare occasions when he was roused by the stupidities of eminent people. He was at times self-



effacing to a degree, and at other times he would fight fiercely for a cause which he felt was important to medicine and especially to pathology. He was a careful and informed reader of English literature, and his writing showed his meticulous command of English—he was equally critical of other people's grammatical errors. He was an enthusiastic philatelist and a Fellow of the Royal Philatelic Society, and an acknowledged authority on the early stamps of the Falkland Islands. He had a quick sense of humour which was wonderfully devoid of malice. His personality really blossomed, however, in his home. His devotion to his wife and his adoration of his children were patent to all who sat at his table, and his pride when his son joined him as a Fellow of the College of Physicians was touching.

He will always be remembered at Great Ormond Street and by all those who worked with him for his devotion to pathology and his kindness to his most junior colleagues.

A. GORDON SIGNY.

BOOK REVIEWS

Ciba Foundation Colloquia on Endocrinology, Vol. 12: *Hormone Production in Endocrine Tumours*. Edited by G. E. W. Wolstenholme and Cecilia M. O'Connor. (Pp. 295+Cumulative Index Vols. 1-12; 60 figures. 48s.) London: J. and A. Churchill. 1958.

This colloquium brought together experts and active workers in many fields of endocrinology. The emphasis was on the pituitary-adrenal axis and on the gonads, and particularly on experimental work in animals.

There are two papers on thyroid tumours, one dealing with their experimental induction by thiouracil and the other describing the discovery of a new iodinated protein in human serum. (In the discussion the existence of a goitrogenic human baby food was mentioned, but not identified.)

In a review on serum insulin the authors claimed that they often found high concentrations in patients with islet-cell tumours, but emphasized methodological difficulties. Van Euler reviewed, briefly and thoroughly, present knowledge and recent advances concerning the chromaffine system. Two interesting short papers on human gonadotrophin excretion seem rather out of place.

It is not possible to summarize all the papers on the main theme in a brief review, but certain conclusions can be drawn. As usual, as much is gained from reading the discussions as from the formal papers. Methods of assay and identification, of pituitary hormones much more than steroid hormones, are still very imperfect, and improvements in technique are necessary in many fields before advances can be made. At present, hormone assays are of very little use in the diagnosis of human tumours, except for thyroid and chromaffine tumours. The nature of hormone dependency is uncertain, and there is still controversy (taking a human tumour as an example) whether hormone-dependent carcinoma of the breast is oestrogen-dependent primarily, or only secondarily because oestrogens stimulate the secretion of mammotrophin.

The volume should be valuable reading for experimental pathologists and for endocrinologists, and will keep them informed and stimulated in this important and difficult field. The reviewer found the section by Furth and Clifton on their experimental induction of four different types of monomorphous pituitary tumours particularly interesting. The paper by Dorfman summarizing pathways of adrenal corticosteroid and androgen metabolism is not wholly new, but is valuable nevertheless: in his fig. 2 he implies that A.C.T.H. is active in the pathway of aldosterone synthesis—is this deliberate?

The cumulative index to the first 12 volumes of these Colloquia is included which will be extremely